

# STUDENTS & ADHD

STRENGTHS, NEEDS AND STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH STUDENTS WHO HAVE ADHD

## What Is ADHD?

People with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) show a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development, and that impacts learning. They can be **inattentive**, **hyperactive**, or a **combination** of both (the most common form).



## The Needs of Students with ADHD

### Strengths of students with ADHD include:

- ◆ Creativity
- ◆ Problem-solving skills
- ◆ Determination
- ◆ Being energetic
- ◆ Intelligence
- ◆ Eager to try new things
- ◆ Hardworking
- ◆ Perseverance



### At home:

- ◆ Difficulty following home routines
- ◆ Increase in frequency of arguments with parents and siblings
- ◆ Difficulty completing homework, daily chores
- ◆ Messy/disorganized room
- ◆ May have problems with punctuality

*65% of children with ADHD have problems with defiance & complying with expectations.*

### At school:

- ◆ Difficulty remaining seated in class
- ◆ Difficulty completing work in a timely fashion
- ◆ Difficulty organizing materials
- ◆ May appear to lack motivation
- ◆ May act without considering the consequences



*25% of children with ADHD also have problems with listening skills, reading comprehension and/or math*

### Socially:

- ◆ Difficulty regulating behavior on playground
- ◆ Trouble interacting with peers
- ◆ Difficulty waiting turns during games
- ◆ Trouble coping with frustration which may lead to irritability/anger
- ◆ May socially isolate themselves

*Children with ADHD are 30% slower in emotional development than peers.*



# The Three Types of ADHD



People with inattentive ADHD often:

## Type 1 – Inattentive

These individuals exhibit significant inattention across multiple domains with no significant hyperactivity or impulsivity.

- ◆ Make mistakes in schoolwork
- ◆ Have trouble keeping attention on tasks or play activities
- ◆ Do not seem to listen when spoken to directly
- ◆ Do not follow through on instructions and fail to finish schoolwork.
- ◆ Have trouble organizing activities
- ◆ Are slow to process information
- ◆ Avoid, dislike, or don't want to do things that take a lot of mental effort for a long period of time
- ◆ Lose things needed for tasks and activities (e.g. toys, assignments, books, tools)
- ◆ Are easily distracted
- ◆ Are forgetful in daily activities

## Type 2 – Hyperactive

These individuals exhibit adequate attentional control, but present with significant deficits with activity level and/or impulse control.



People with hyperactive ADHD often:

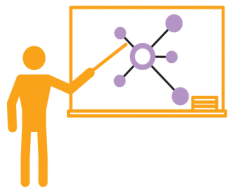
- ◆ Fidget with hands or feet in seat when sitting still is expected
- ◆ Get up from seat when remaining in seat is expected
- ◆ Excessively run about or climb when and where it is not appropriate (adolescents or adults may feel very restless)
- ◆ Have trouble playing or doing leisure activities quietly
- ◆ Talk loudly and/or excessively
- ◆ Blurt out answers before questions have been finished
- ◆ Have trouble waiting one's turn
- ◆ Interrupt or intrude on others
- ◆ Are "on the go" or act as if "driven by a motor"



## Type 3 – Combination

A third type of ADHD involves both hyperactivity and inattention, combining the characteristics of the other two types.

*A combination of inattentiveness and hyperactivity is the **most common form** of ADHD.*



# Strategies for working with students who have ADHD:

## *Students who are inattentive (type 1):*

- ◆ Consider student placement within the classroom environment; when possible, seat them away from doors and windows
- ◆ Help the child learn to make and use checklists, crossing items off as they are accomplished
- ◆ Develop and use a behavior plan with specific goals and daily positive reinforcement
- ◆ Divide big assignments into several smaller ones
- ◆ Use a timer to complete a reasonable amount of work
- ◆ Provide assistance with organization
- ◆ Assign the student a peer partner to clarify questions as needed or to provide on-task reminders
- ◆ Provide study carrels or quiet work areas; in extreme cases, earphones or earplugs may be needed
- ◆ Utilize student signals (such as turning off the lights or playing music) to gain student attention
- ◆ Allow at least 5 seconds of wait time when asking students to respond to questions
- ◆ Use whole-class responses to ensure students are engaged in instruction
- ◆ When appropriate, allow the student to use learning aides (computers, calculators, etc.)
- ◆ Help the student develop their own strategies for coping with their inattentiveness
- ◆ Teach self-management of behavior
- ◆ Model appropriate behavior modeling



## *Students who are hyperactive (type 2):*

- ◆ Develop and use a behavior plan with specific goals and daily positive reinforcement
- ◆ Clear hands and desk of distractions
- ◆ Allow legitimate movement
- ◆ Allow students to stand while working
- ◆ Use discreet gestures or words you have previously agreed upon to let the child know they are interrupting; praise the child for interruption-free conversations
- ◆ Provide assistance with organization
- ◆ Work with student to create a behavioral contract
- ◆ Maintain proximity control
- ◆ Give consequences immediately following misbehavior; be specific in your explanation, making sure the child knows how they misbehaved
- ◆ Use physical cueing (hand on shoulder, tapping desk)
- ◆ Help the student develop their own strategies for coping with their impulsiveness
- ◆ Utilize preventative cueing
- ◆ Help physically guide students through transitions
- ◆ Reward positive behavior
- ◆ Insure that all staff working with a student are aware of their unique learning needs
- ◆ Make sure necessary supplies are available so students can work independently without excuses
- ◆ Provide opportunities for physical movement (e.g., running errands, distributing/collecting materials)
- ◆ When appropriate, utilize multisensory instruction
- ◆ Recognize good behavior out loud; be specific in your praise, making sure the child knows what they did right

*Above all, differentiate the child from the behavior.*

*See the child first, then the behavior!*